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ABSTRACT

As the 20th century closes, the general consensus is that education in Africa is in crisis. The challenge is to revitalize education in Africa and to do so in ways that enable African countries not only to close the development gap but also to leap ahead. Pointing out the rich diversity and considering carefully the bounding conditions for each general comment, this paper explores major issues and themes in education in contemporary Africa. The paper states that, as the general crisis has unfolded, external aid agencies increasingly have come to provide development advice as well as finance, and that, consequently, their influence may be far greater than the absolute value of their aid suggests. It reviews the trajectory, from education as social transformation, broad development engine, and foundation for self-reliance to aid dependence and education as targeted skills formation. The paper finds that: (1) in Africa, although education for all remains a distant goal, the commitment is still to expanded access; (2) another commitment of Africa's post-colonial leadership was to desegregate the schools and the curriculum; and (3) a third commitment of the leadership was to use the education system to address inequality. It discusses in detail the difficulties of fulfilling those commitments. The paper concludes that notwithstanding the rhetoric of liberation and empowerment, the commonly held view is that education must enable Africa to run faster as it tries to catch up with those who are ahead rather than to forge new paths or to transform the international economy and Africa's role in it. Contains 10 tables of data, 35 notes, and 59 references. (BT)

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NO TEACHER GUIDE, NO TEXTBOOKS, NO CHAIRS:

CONTENDING WITH CRISIS IN AFRICAN EDUCATION

Joel Samoff

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No Teacher Guide, No Textbooks, No Chairs: Contending with Crisis in African Education[1]

Joel Samoff

The sense of excitement, hope, and anticipation in African education has been replaced by widespread dismay, disappointment, and discouragement. As the twentieth century closes, the general consensus is that education in Africa is in crisis. Africa has of course also been the site of imaginative experiments, innovations in the content and forms of education, and critical reflections on the role of education in society. Both long before Europeans arrived and to this day, Africa's intellectual contributions have had global influence. Still, the prevailing wisdom highlights crisis. After a period of rapid growth and dramatic progress, education in Africa, at all levels and in all forms, is in dire straits, we are told. With few exceptions, both schools and learning have deteriorated, and the situation is continuing to worsen. Roofs leak and wind blows through paneless windows. There are too few teachers to sustain expanded access, too many teachers have had little preparation, and very few teachers have opportunities to improve their skills. Universities have experienced stagnating or declining budgets and simultaneous pressures to increase enrollment. Libraries are outdated, laboratories poorly equipped, and funds for research nearly nonexistent. The need for action is urgent. The challenge is to revitalize education in Africa and to do so in ways that enable African countries not only to close the development gap but to leap ahead.

Notwithstanding imaginative responses to crisis and remarkable resilience in face of adversity, commentators see no end for the decay and disarray.

> In the 1990s and beyond, institutions of higher education in Africa, especially the universities, must contend with several interrelated major problems, whose combined effect threatens to strangulate them. . . . To say that higher education is in Africa is in crisis does not mean simply that the funds available to run higher education institutions are grossly inadequate . . . . More than that, African countries and societies are going through a period of economic uncertainty, political and social upheavals, plus other contortions, and higher education has become a victim of the prevailing state of affairs. The situation is likely to remain so, well into the twenty-first century.[2]

How, then, to make sense of this transition from the expansive expectations of the immediate post-colonial era to pervasive degeneration, from promise to progress to crisis? Like education itself, the analysis of education in Africa requires attention to both content and forms, and especially to context and process. In the remainder of this brief overview, let us explore major issues and themes in education in contemporary Africa.[3] My concern is draw on diverse sources to explore both outcomes and, more important, analytic frameworks.

"Education in Africa," like "African education," is of course a simplification fraught with risk. For most purposes, neither exists. With care, it is possible to study education in Guinée or to explore the unique characteristics of, say, Ghanaian education. But where the diversity within countries is vast and where most countries are themselves of very recent origin, it is foolhardy to speak in general terms about a continent of more than 50 countries. Still, to identify and understand similarities and commonalities we must at times defer attention to individual variations. Hence, as we consider here shared patterns across Africa, we must at the same time constantly recall and respect Africa's rich diversity and consider carefully the bounding conditions for each general comment.

Education in Africa at the Century's End

The final decade of the twentieth century is a period of reflection and reevaluation for African development. The optimism of the decolonization of the late 1950s and early 1960s has been displaced by a deep dismay at persisting poverty and a profound pessimism about the viability of any strategy of social transformation. For many, the objective is no longer broad improvement in the standard of living or self-reliance but simply survival.

Education, too, has experienced a similar transition. Earlier, education, formal and nonformal, was expected to be the principal vehicle for social change, both helping to define the new society and enabling its citizens to function effectively within it. Not only were the illiterate to be able to read and write, but they and other newly educated were also to foster innovation, to accelerate the generation and diffusion of ideas and technologies, and to monitor and manage a responsive political system. Education was also to be the vehicle for redressing discrimination and inequality, both in daily practice and in popular understanding.

There has been progress, in some countries very substantial achievements. Still, in much of Africa, many children get little or no schooling, illiteracy rates have ceased to decline or even risen, school libraries have few books, laboratories have outdated or malfunctioning equipment and insufficient supplies, and learners lack chairs, exercise books, even pencils. As I have noted, nearly all observers characterize contemporary African education as in crisis. Many, both inside and outside Africa, are pessimistic about the ability of national authorities to address the crisis effectively.

In this setting, recourse to foreign aid has become a way of life. Almost without exception, education reform proposals are presumed to require external funding. In some, perhaps many, countries, even the day-to-day operation of the education system is dependent on overseas support.

As the general crisis has unfolded, external aid agencies have increasingly come to provide development advice as well as finance. Notwithstanding its critical role, their funding remains a very modest portion of total education expenditures. Consequently, their influence may be far greater than the absolute value of their aid suggests. Indeed, some agencies, and especially the World Bank, currently assert that their development expertise is even more important than their funds. "[The World Bank's] . . . main contribution must be advice, designed to help governments develop education policies suitable for the circumstances of their countries.[4]

The increased reliance on foreign aid to support education innovation and reform has been accompanied by another transition, from a conception of education as a human right and general good to understanding education instrumentally, primarily in terms of its contribution to national growth through the development of the knowledge and skills societies are deemed to need. Occasional voices continue to insist that education is liberating and that learning is inherently developmental. Most often, however, education is regarded as distinctly instrumental, an investment in a country's future, a production system that (more or less successfully) turns out people with particular competencies and attitudes, and a delivery system that transfers wisdom, expectations, ways of thinking, and discipline to the next generation.[5] As we shall see, these two currents—on the one hand the expanded role for foreign aid and its providers and with it the tendency to address education through the prism and with the tools of finance and on the other understanding education primarily as preparation for work—reinforce each other with enduring consequences for education in Africa.

Let us review briefly that trajectory, from education as social transformation, broad development engine, and foundation for self-reliance to aid dependence and education as targeted skills formation.

Toward Education for All

For nearly all African countries, the starting point was an inherited education system that excluded most of the population. For education to transform society, therefore, the first task had to be to expand access, and to do so massively and rapidly. Indeed, expanded access had become both a popular demand of the anti-colonial nationalist movement and a promise of the newly installed leadership. The premise was personal as well as political. Access to education was the primary route by which nearly all of Africa's initial leaders escaped, or rather mitigated, the discrimination and domination of European rule. Where there was a clear effort to reject race and other ascriptive criteria for employment and promotion, education's selection role became even more important. As well, opening schools in urban neighborhoods and rural villages was the most readily achievable and visible manifestation of the new government's accomplishments. The progress in this regard was indeed remarkable.

Table 1 On Africa Education Statistics

Source	Primary Gross Enrollment Ratio (%)[a] Sub-Saharan Africa 1970	1980	1990
UNESCO, *World Education Report 1991*	46.3		76.2
UNESCO, *World Education Report 1993*		77.5	68.3
World Bank, *Education in Sub-Saharan Africa*[b]	48.0	76.0	
World Bank, *African Development Indicators 1994–1995*		77.0	66.0
World Bank, *World Development Report 1993*[b]	46.0		68.0
World Bank, *World Development Report 1995*[b]	50.0		
World Bank, *World Development Report 1996*[c]		80.0	
World Bank, *World Development Report 1997*[c]		79.0	

[a]School enrollment as a percentage of the relevant age group.
[b]Weighted average.
[c]Weighted average; male and female combined.

Unfortunately, before turning to the data on African education, we must recognize that the apparent precision provided by numbers is often fundamentally misleading. Put sharply, the margin of error on reported African educa-

tion data is often far larger than the observed variation. Hence, an apparent change over time—say, in enrollment or public spending—may not be a change at all.

The problems are several. Available figures are often inaccurate, inconsistent, and not readily comparable. Schools, districts, and other sources provide incomplete and inaccurate information. Sources differ on periodization and on the specification of expenditure categories. Especially common are the confusion of budget and actual expenditure data and the comparison of budget figures in one year with expenditure reports in another. Recurrent and development (capital) expenditures are treated inconsistently. Often the available data do not include individual, family, local government, and direct foreign spending. Discussions of the cost of education in fact generally refer to government expenditures on education. Inflation, deflation, and exchange rates are treated inconsistently. Data series are frequently too short to be sure that observed variation reflects significant change.

One example of this problem must suffice as the caveat for the data that follow.[6] How many children are in school? Or, more important, what percentage of the relevant age group is in school? Table 1 lists the primary gross enrollment ratio for Sub-Saharan Africa (recall, available data generally exclude North Africa) in 1970, 1980, and 1990 as reported in several widely used sources. Notice that the reported figure for 1970 varies from 46% to 50%—nearly a 9% difference—in different editions of the World Bank's own publication. Similarly, in this small sample, the reported figures for 1990 vary from 66% to 76%, a 15% difference. What happened over those two decades? Did primary enrollment increase by two-thirds (from 46% to 76%) or half that (a 32% increase, from 50% to 66%), or something in between? From the available data, we cannot be sure. What we can reasonably say is that fewer than half the school aged children were in school in 1970, that by 1980 progress had been substantial, with some three-fourths in school, and that there had been a significant decline by 1990.

Table 2 Enrollment Growth, Sub-Saharan Africa, 1960–1995

(Millions and Percent)

	1960	1970	1980	1990	1995	Growth since 1960 (1995 as % of 1960) 1960–1995
Primary	11.85	21.0	47.1	58.1	76.5	646%
Secondary	0.79	2.6	8.1	11.9	18.8	2,380%
Tertiary	0.02	0.1	0.3	0.9	1.9	9,048%

Sources: for 1960, 1970, and 1980: World Bank, *Education in Sub-Saharan Africa*, Tables A-1, A-2, and A-4.
for 1990: UNESCO, *World Education Report 1993*, Regional Tables 6, 7, and 8.
for 1995: UNESCO, *World Education Report 1995*, Regional Tables 6, 7, and 8.

Note: for given years, UNESCO estimates are higher than corresponding World Bank estimates. Hence, while the expansion of enrollment is clear, the magnitude of that change may be somewhat less than suggested by this comparison of reported 1960 and 1995 data.

The implications seem clear. First, it is essential to take seriously that margin of error, that is, to treat most national education statistics as rough approximations. Second, small observed changes may be more apparent than real. Even changes on the order of 5-10% (or greater) may reflect nothing more significant than random fluctuations, annual variations, and flawed statistics. Consequently, apparent changes of that magnitude are a weak foundation for broad inferences and for public policy. Third, both researchers and policy makers must reject statistics whose underlying assumptions require a level of precision, or linearity, or continuity that the data do not reliably support. Finally, effective use of available data requires seeing through the facade of precision and demystifying the use of statistics. A profusion of numbers neither makes a particular interpretation more valid nor renders a policy proposal more attractive. Indeed, the numeric halo may well obscure far more than it reveals.

Duly cautious, let us consider the accomplishments. Primary school enrollments increased more than sixfold from 1960 to 1995 (Table 2). From very small starting points, secondary enrollments were 23 times greater in 1995 than in 1960, and tertiary 90 times larger. In societies where at the end of colonial rule less than a tenth of the population was deemed literate, illiteracy steadily declined (Table 3). Comparable figures for the number of schools opened, post-secondary institutions created, and new teachers recruited show similar substantial growth. Clearly, access to education expanded dramatically and rapidly.

Yet, those growth rates could not be sustained. Indeed, some measures showed important reversals where progress had seemed assured (Table 4). For many countries the primary enrollment ratio stagnated or even declined, one

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indication of the deterioration of public services and of the inability of governments to meet their commitment to move toward schooling for all their citizens. At the same time, the supporting infrastructure for the rapid expansion was also sorely stretched. In many places buildings were not maintained, crash teacher recruitment programs were not accompanied by in-service professional development opportunities, low salaries forced teachers to look outside their classrooms to supplement their incomes, curriculum revision and textbook preparation proceeded slowly if at all, and morale plummeted. By the late 1980s African education was in crisis.

> It is not uncommon to find a teacher standing in front of 80-100 pupils who are sitting on a dirt floor in a room without a roof, trying to convey orally the limited knowledge he has, and the pupils trying to take notes on a piece of wrinkled paper using as a writing board the back of the pupil in front of him. There is no teacher guide for the teacher and no textbooks for the children.[7]

For at least some countries the situation has continued to deteriorate, with a decline in the absolute number of children enrolled in schools. Overall, the proportion of Africa's school age children actually in school now is smaller than it was at the beginning of the 1980s.

Note, too, that access to education in Africa is substantially lower than in most other regions of the world[8] Sub-Saharan Africa's primary gross enrollment ratio in 1995 was 73.9%, compared to 99.1% for the Less Developed Regions as a group, 99.6% for the World, and 104.5% for the More Developed Regions. At the secondary level in the same year, Sub-Saharan' Africa's gross enrollment ratio is half that of the Less Developed Regions: 24.3% (Sub-Saharan Africa), 48.8% (Less Developed Regions), 58.1% (World), and 105.8% (More Developed Regions). At the tertiary level the gaps are larger still: 3.5% (Sub-Saharan Africa), 8.8% (Less Developed Regions), 16.2% (World), and 59.6% (More Developed Regions). Within Africa, the variation was large, for example at the primary level from 29% (Niger) to 135% (Malawi).

Table 3 Estimated Adult Literacy Rate, Sub-Saharan Africa, 1960–1990

(Percent)

	1960	1970	1980	1990	1995
Adult Literacy	9.0	22.6	40.2	47.3	56.8

Sources:
1960: World Bank, *Education in Sub-Saharan Africa*, Table C-4.
1970: UNESCO, *World Education Report 1991*, Table R8.
1980: UNESCO, *World Education Report 1995*, Table 3. (Note that UNESCO, *World Education Report 1993*, gives 32.5% for 1980.)
1990: UNESCO, *World Education Report 1993*, Table 3.
1995: UNESCO, *World Education Report 1998*, Regional Table 3.

Note: Estimates of adult literacy are likely to have a large margin of error and may be calculated and reported differently by different sources or by the same source in different years. For example, while the UNESCO World Education Report *1995 estimates adult literacy for 1980 to have been 40.2% (as shown above), the UNESCO* World Education Report *1993 estimates adult literacy for 1980 to have been 32.5%. For another example, while the UNESCO* World Education Report *1998 estimates adult literacy in 1995 to have been 56.8% (as shown above), the* African Development Report *1998 estimates adult literacy for that year to have been 44% (Table 1.1). Hence, although the data suggest steadily increasing literacy over this period, since the margin of error is likely to be greater than the annual, or even the five-year, variation, we cannot be sure.*

In 1990 governments and international and non-governmental organizations enthusiastically committed themselves to Education For All.[9] Though it shared that commitment, indeed was and is one of its principal arenas of action, Africa found itself moving in the opposite direction. Far from an engine for social transformation, Africa's education systems found it increasingly difficult to provide even basic schooling.

Large Commitments, Little Wealth

What had happened? In Africa as elsewhere it is common to blame governments for education problems. What is particularly striking, however, is the extent to which governments maintained their commitment to education even in periods of dire economic distress. Many African governments adopted structural adjustment programs, with a larger or smaller role for the international financial organizations, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Often termed "liberalization," these programs generally emphasized substantial devaluation, decreased direct government role in the economy, especially in productive activities, reduction in the size of the civil service, encouragement of foreign investment, and support for privatization of many activities, including public services. Nearly everywhere the implementation of these policies meant increased prices for consumer goods and new or increased fees for social services, including education. Notwithstanding the pressures to constrain or reduce education spending, for example by employing paraprofessional or other lower paid instructional personnel, many African governments maintained their basic commitment to funding education. Expressed as a percentage of the national budget, spending on education did

not decline (Table 5). Indeed, in terms of the overall economy, the level of spending on education in much of Africa is comparable to or greater than that in the world's most affluent countries (Table 6).

A large portion of a small budget, however, is still small. For Africa, government revenues did not permit a continuing increase in enrollments or even the maintenance of per capita spending that is very low in international terms. Over several decades, international terms of trade have generally worsened for Africa. In some countries, servicing the national debt requires a share of the national budget comparable to that of education. That is, while Africa's relative spending on education was high, the actual amounts were very small. By 1995, Sub-Saharan Africa was spending $87 per pupil while North America was spending $5,150, Europe $4,552, and Latin America and the Caribbean, $444 (Table 7). Equally dramatic, while the per capita education spending increased 66% in North America from 1985 to 1995, 152% in Europe, and 110% in Latin America and the Caribbean, in Sub-Saharan Africa during the same period the per capita spending declined 5%. That African countries came to independence with few educated people and a very small education infrastructure and have a much larger school-age population makes the comparison even more stark. Thus, while there has clearly been ineffective and inefficient education (and national) management, and while there surely can be more effective use of limited funds, the principal constraint has been not a lack of commitment or a failure of leadership or inefficiency, but rather the volume of total government revenue. Increasing indebtedness, another consequence of aid dependence, consumes an increasing portion of the revenue that is available. Even with great sacrifices, in absolute terms there was little money for education.

Table 4 Primary Gross Enrollment Ratio, Sub-Saharan Africa, 1970–1990

(Percent)

1970	1980	1985	1990
46.3	77.5	76.1	68.3

Sources:
1970: UNESCO, *World Education Report 1991*, Table R4.
1980: UNESCO, *World Education Report 1993*, Regional Table 6.
1985: UNESCO, *World Education Report 1998*, Regional Table 6.
1990: UNESCO, *World Education Report 1993*, Regional Table 6.

The resource constraint is compounded by a generally conservative policy orientation that equates education with formal schools and that is reluctant to explore alternative learning approaches that depart significantly from the common classroom model. Education was to be the developmental engine, the principal strategy for eliminating poverty and closing the gap between the most and least affluent countries. For education to play that role, however, especially in the absence of radically innovative curriculum, pedagogy, and school organization, required resources that were simply not available. A consequence of this dilemma is that for poor countries—most of the world's poorest countries are in Africa—the development gap is likely to continue to expand. Education for all remains not only a distant, but apparently a receding goal.

Table 5 Public Expenditure on Education As a Percentage of Total Government Expenditure, Sub-Saharan Africa, 1970–1995

(Percent)

1970	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995
16.7	16.6	16.2	15.0	16.7	17.6

Sources:
1960–1980: World Bank, *Education in Sub-Saharan Africa*, Table A-14 (weighted mean).
1985: UNESCO, *World Education Report 1998*, Table 10.
1990: Association for the Development of African Education, *A Statistical Profile of Education in Sub-Saharan Africa, 1990–1993*, Table A-14.
1995: UNESCO, *World Education Report 1998*, Table 10.
Note: In view of my earlier comments about unreliable data and in view of the multiple sources of error in these derived figures, I present them reluctantly. Since the margin of error is likely to be large, the most reasonable interpretation is that these data suggest there has not been significant change in the proportion of the Sub-Saharan Africa's national budgets allocated to education over this 25 year period.

It is useful to note here that within countries, differences in communities' and individuals' ability to invest in education are constrained by redistributive education financing. Though the specific mechanisms vary, the common general principle is that the most affluent segments of the population bear the largest share of supporting the education system, including the education of the poorest children. Notwithstanding the contemporary fascination with globalization, there has yet to emerge a serious proposal for estab-

lishing that pattern globally, that is for internationally redistributive education funding. To date, foreign aid provides a very small percentage of Africa's total spending on education,[10] and whatever its magnitude, much of the aid to African education is in fact spent on personnel, services, products, and scholarships in the aid-providing country. Hence, in at least some settings, far from redistribution toward Africa, foreign aid may in fact function to generate a net outflow of both capital and skills from Africa.

Desegregation and Resegregation

Along with expanded access, the second major commitment of Africa's post-colonial leadership was to desegregate the schools and the curriculum. On that, progress has been substantial. Formal racial restrictions were eliminated immediately. Informal barriers weakened as senior civil servants and other more affluent Africans moved into formerly white neighborhoods and sent their children to elite schools. Although the most egregious elements were addressed immediately, for example teaching the history of Africa as the history of Europeans in Africa, revising the general curriculum has taken longer and proved more difficult. Post-colonial education systems had few African staff with relevant expertise and experience, and in any case revising instructional materials and teachers' guides is a time consuming and often expensive process. Equally important, since curriculum revision revolves around issues of quality and standards, proposed replacements for the inherited materials were often sharply debated. Not infrequently, proposed modifications were rejected as polemical or political. The persisting powerful role of national examinations, widely accepted as the official and formal measure of the quality of education and revised much more slowly and less radically than instructional materials, continues to be a brake on curriculum revision.

Table 6 Estimated Public Expenditure on Education, 1980–1995, as Percentage of Gross National Product

(Percent)

	1980	1985	1990	1995
Sub-Saharan Africa	5.1	4.8	5.1	5.6
World Total	4.9	4.9	4.9	4.9
North America	5.2	5.1	5.4	5.5
Europe	5.2	5.2	5.1	5.4
Latin America and Caribbean	3.8	3.9	4.1	4.5

Source: UNESCO, *World Education Report 1998*, Table 12.

At the same time, there are clear indications of the reemergence of racial differentiation in at least some African countries. The combination of deterioration (actual and perceived) in schools' quality and financial crisis has led to efforts transfer a larger share of the costs of schooling to students and their families, generally through school fees and in some countries an expanded role for private schools. High fee schools, whether public or private, can offer better prepared and better paid teachers, equipped and staffed libraries, laboratories, and computer centers, and frequently increased likelihood of success at the next selection point. Where that occurs, schools become stratified. Notwithstanding commitments to equal opportunity, in practice access to elite schools is a function of disposable resources. While the differentiator is money rather than race, since the two are related, racial distinctions have reemerged, in some countries even within government schools. Ironically, where the (formerly) white schools are perceived to provide the highest quality education, the newly admitted African elite often becomes the staunchest defenders of their privileges. It seems likely this will prove to be a particularly daunting problem for South Africa, where decentralized authority provides some protection for white parents who seek to preserve their generally better funded, staffed, and equipped schools.

Equality and Equity

A third commitment of the post-colonial leadership was to use the education system to address inequality. Expanded access was an important but insufficient step in that direction. At a minimum, schools were no longer to reproduce and reinforce the inequalities and injustices of the larger society. Non-discriminatory recruitment and meritocratic selection were to redress the inherited inequities.

Historically, schools had been primary agents in reproducing a sharply unequal social order. Limited recruitment and severely constrained academic pathways restricted most Africans to less skilled and lower paying jobs and to their concomitant social status. There were important exceptions. A few Africans did reach the highest levels of the educa-

tion system, surpassing many of their European peers. A few poets, novelists, and playwrights found ways to publish their work. A few West Africans were elected to the French parliament and served in the cabinet. Especially where missionary education had a longer history, a few families could point to several generations of university graduates. That schooling was not fully racially exclusive, however, did not make it egalitarian. Most Africans simply never got the chance. Most of the few who did soon found they could no longer proceed. Hence, to convert schools from institutions for creating and maintaining inequality into vehicles for achieving equality would require a fundamental transformation. What in fact has occurred in this regard? Framing our efforts to explore that are several issues of terminology and public policy.

First, common in much of the analysis of education in Africa is a confusion of *equity* and *equality*. This confusion is potentially quite problematic for public policy, since although generally equity requires equal treatment, there may be particular circumstances when achieving equity requires differentiated treatment. One manifestation of the equation of the two terms is in the World Bank's 1995 review of education policies, which assigns equity a high priority and defines it in terms of access to school.[11] Basic education should be universal, and "qualified potential students [should not be] denied access to institutions because they are poor or female, are from ethnic minorities, live in geographically remote regions, or have special education needs." That is, equity means equal treatment, and thus the confusion.

Table 7 Estimated Public Current Expenditure on Education, 1985 and 1995 Per Pupil and Percent of GNP Per Capita

(US$ and Percent)

	1985		1995	
	US$	% of GNP per capita	US$	% of GNP per capita
Sub-Saharan Africa	92	29.0	87	30.4
World Total	683	22.4	1,273	22.0
North America	3,107	19.0	5,150	22.0
Europe	1,803	22.1	4,552	22.7
Latin America and Caribbean	211	11.7	444	12.9

Source: UNESCO. *World Education Report 1998*. Table 13.

Equality has to do with sameness, or in public policy, with nondiscrimination. Equality has to do with making sure that some learners are not assigned to smaller classes, or receive more or better textbooks, or are preferentially promoted because of their race, or gender, or regional origin, or family wealth. While there may be valid educational grounds for differentiating among students, equal access requires that status differences not function to limit or guide admission, promotion, and selection.

Equity, however, has to do with fairness and justice. And there is the problem. Sometimes the two do not go together, at least in the short term. Where there has been a history of discrimination—which of course is the common case for essentially all former colonies—justice may require providing special encouragement and support for those who were disadvantaged in the past. Given its history, what is equitable education in post-apartheid South Africa? Clearly, repealing discriminatory laws will not in itself achieve equality of access any time soon. Nor will the discriminatory elements embedded in curriculum, pedagogy, and examinations disappear of their own accord. The circumstances in which focused attention and additional assistance are required and appropriate are and ought to be a matter of public debate. But where it is deemed reasonable, that affirmative action may involve pursuing policies that treat different groups of people in somewhat different ways. The point, of course, is not to keep the advantaged group out, but rather to help the disadvantaged group to join in.

To achieve equity—justice—may require structured inequalities, at least temporarily. Achieving equal access, itself a very difficult challenge, is a first step toward achieving equity. But to define equity as equality distracts attention from injustice rather than exploring and addressing the links between discrimination and injustice.

As well, even within the more limited specification of equity as equality, what is generally envisioned is equality of opportunity. But how is it possible to know whether or not opportunities have been equal without considering outcomes? A careful study might, for example, find no visible gender discrimination in selection to primary school, or in the primary school pedagogy. But if that study also finds that the attrition and failure rates are much higher among girls than among boys, we might conclude that opportunities were not equal after all. Similarly, if regional origin, or race, or ethnicity is clearly visible in examination results, notwithstanding the lack of obvious regional or racial or ethnic dis-

crimination, we might again conclude that in fact opportunities were not equal. That is, measures of access are insufficient for assessing equality of opportunity. Discovering and redressing inequalities of opportunity requires considering outcomes as well as starting points.

Second, also common in discussions of equality and equity is the assumption of a fundamental tension between growth and equity. African countries must choose, commentators often assert, between allocating resources to promote growth or instead using those resources to achieve equity. While it is certainly the case that African governments must make development choices, it is far from clear that growth and equity are alternatives, especially in education. Where inequality is associated with the concentration of wealth and persisting poverty for the majority, for example, limited consumer demand may constrain the expansion of production and productive capacity. Where competencies and understandings are not widely diffused, there may be chronic difficulties in filling skilled labor posts and thus continued reliance on much more expensive expatriates, and it may be correspondingly difficult to reorient the work force as forms and circumstances of production change. Intensified inequality is both a barrier to broad participation in democratic governance and a breeding ground for socially disruptive discontent. Though less often argued, there is a strong case for the view that growth and equity are not alternatives but mutually dependent, each requiring and advancing the other.

Third, as access has expanded, in part because of the massive resources required to transform primary education for a selected elite into basic education for all, that broadened base quickly narrows into a highly selective education system in most of Africa. The exclusion point has moved farther along in the school cycle. As Table 8 shows, for all of Sub-Saharan Africa, fewer than one-fourth of those who start school proceed beyond the basic level and only 2.5% reach tertiary education. Comparable percentages for Latin American and the Caribbean are 31.6% and 9.9% and for North America are 88.1% and 61.0%. These continental figures surely obscure significant variations among African countries. Still, they show clearly that for most Africans, schooling is a process of ever narrowing selection, with only a few learners able to proceed to the advanced levels.

Table 8 Enrollment and Selection, Education in Sub-Saharan Africa, 1995

Level	Total Enrollment (millions)	As Percent of Preceding Level	As Percent of Primary Enrollment
Primary	76.5	—	—
Secondary	18.8	24.6%	24.6%
Tertiary	1.9	10.1%	2.5%

Source: UNESCO, *World Education Report 1998*, Tables 6, 7, and 8.

Fourth, while earlier discussions of (in)equality and (in)equity in education were generally concerned with region (a surrogate for ethnicity and, more commonly, tribe), in recent years the principal focus has shifted to gender. Explaining that transition in focus and exploring its consequences is beyond the scope of this paper. It is important to note, however, that there is substantial and reliable evidence that access to and success in school is in many places sharply differentiated by region, religion, race or national origin, and class. Learners from one area of the country, for example, are more likely to be selected and do better than their peers from other areas. Available data indicate that Christian communities generally have more schools, more children in school, and more graduates than Muslim communities. Within Africa, Koranic and other Muslim schools have not been a serious academic alternative to secular (that is, western and at least unofficially Christian) education. Where relevant data are collected, the systematic finding is that children from more affluent and higher status families are more likely to find school places and to proceed to higher levels. Notwithstanding the ample evidence of these inequalities, they are far less often the focus of discussion and systematic research than gender differentiation. Several countries have adopted gender affirmative action programs. But there seem to be no comparable initiatives to assist prospective learners discouraged or disadvantaged by region, ethnicity, race, national origin, religion, or socioeconomic status. Earlier age-related affirmative action, for example, mature age entry schemes for higher education with reserved places for older applicants, seem to have been deemphasized or discarded.

Let us now turn now to efforts to encourage and support girls to enter and succeed in school. As Table 9 shows, while the percentage of literate adult females in Sub-Saharan Africa has more than tripled over the past quarter century, still half remain illiterate while two-thirds of the adult males are literate. Progress toward equal gender access to primary school has been clear, though for the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa as a group, females do not yet constitute half the enrollment (Table 10). From lower starting points (one-fourth of the secondary school population and one

tenth of tertiary enrollment in 1960), there has been similar progress at secondary and tertiary levels. Still, by the mid 1990s females constituted only slightly more than one-third of total tertiary enrollment. The variation among African countries is substantial. At the primary level, for example, the female gross enrollment ratio in 1995 varied from 22% (Niger) to 134% (Namibia).[12] In the same year, the variation in the female gross enrollment ratio at the secondary level was from 4% (Chad and Malawi) to 88% (South Africa), and at the tertiary level from 0.1% (Chad and Tanzania) to 15.2% (South Africa).[13]

A recent research overview concluded that

> although tremendous gains have been made since the 1960s in most places, participation levels of girls still remain lower than those of boys. Repetition, drop-out and failure is very high among girls, beginning at the primary level and continuing throughout the system: many girls remain outside the formal education system. The small number of girls who remain in the system tend to be directed away from science, mathematics and technical subjects . . . . Consequently, female participation in the [formal] labour market is limited . . . . Female illiteracy remains high.[14]

It is striking that in a very short period the concern with females' experiences in education has moved from relative inattention to a central focus of education analysis and in at least some countries, of education policy and planning. A review of nearly 150 broad studies of African education undertaken during the late 1980s found little explicit attention to girls' education. A review of some 240 studies completed in the early 1990s found that essentially all addressed that topic.[15] That increased attention has been accompanied by the development of organizations, institutions, and networks concerned with females' education at the continental, national, and local levels. Several of the external funding agencies, international, national, and nongovernmental, many within the context of their own gender or women in development programs, provide significant support for efforts to increase girls' recruitment and school success.

Table 9 Estimated Adult Literacy Rates in Sub-Saharan Africa, 1970–1995

(Percentages)

Year	Total	Female	Male
1970	22.6%	13.2%	32.5%
1980[a]	32.5%	22.3%	43.2%
1980[b]	40.2%	29.2%	51.8%
1985	45.6%	34.9%	56.7%
1990	47.3%	35.6%	59.5%
1995	56.8%	47.3%	66.6%

Percentage of literature adults in the population aged 15 years and older.

Sources:

1970 UNESCO, *World Education Report, 1991*, Table R8.

1980[a] UNESCO, *World Education Report, 1993*, Table 3.

1980[b] UNESCO, *World Education Report, 1995*, Table 3.

1985 UNESCO, *World Education Report, 1998*, Table 3.

1990 UNESCO, *World Education Report, 1993*, Table 3.

1995 UNESCO, *World Education Report, 1998*, Table 3.

At the same time, dissonant voices persist. As elsewhere, some believe that the differential experiences of males and females simply reflect deep characteristics of human society and therefore cannot be modified dramatically. Others see the concern with gender as yet one more value and priority imported to Africa and imposed by outsiders, often as a condition for foreign aid. Still others accord gender no special prominence, insisting instead on addressing gender as part of a broader focus on equality and equity.

The most common research orientation in this arena reflects very clearly both the dominance and limitations of what has come to be the standard model for social science research. Generally, the starting point is a set of instrumental assumptions about the value and importance of educating females, especially expanding and strengthening the skills of the work force, increasing employability, improving family health, and reducing fertility. If educating females produces clear social and individual benefits, then when do they not constitute half the school population? Researchers then seek to identify explanatory factors for lower enrollment or higher attrition, both in and out of school. The candidate causes are by now well known: parental attitudes, gender-differentiated expectations for future income (based at least in part on gender-differentiated salary scales), females' labor and household responsibilities, the absence of role models at home and in school, explicit and implicit discouragement for pursuing particular courses of study, parents' level of education, family religious and moral precepts, sexual harassment and early pregnancy, and more. Much of this commentary talks of bringing women into the development process.

Some analysts, however, stress that as primary producers of agriculture and reproducers of the family women are already at the core of the development process. In that view, the problem is not one of malintegration but rather the relations of power and authority. From this perspective, since schools reflect the social order in which they function, it

is not surprising that societal gender distinctions infiltrate and orient the schools. That is, to confront gender inequality in education requires not so much identifying individual causative factors but reconstructing social, and therefore economic and political, relations. In this approach, schools must function not to incorporate females more efficiently into an inegalitarian society but rather schools must become locations and agents of social transformation. This understanding of the problem and approaches to it, though forcefully presented in the general literature on African development, is with few exceptions little evident in the studies of African education, which for the most part continue to list variables and attempt to test their relative importance.

Education and Development

Education has many missions. At the most basic level, education is responsible for developing across society the literacy and numeracy that modern society expects of all its citizens. As it develops that foundation, education also links generations and people, transmitting culture and values and modifying them in the process. The contemporary world demands competencies that go well beyond basic literacy and numeracy. Successful farmers have always been comparativists, noting the advantages and disadvantages of planting a bit earlier or closer, or harvesting sooner, or interspersing particular crops. Today, those comparisons require reading, writing, and calculating, indeed more. Successful farmers need to be able to receive and assess weather forecasts, to understand when fertilizer will make things grow and when it will burn crops, to learn from experts' experiments and distant experiences, and to project the costs and potential benefits of a particular innovation. Education is thus important not only to a society's elite but to all its members. Knowledge is not static. People refine what they know and often discard what they thought they knew, replacing it with new understandings. Hence, education must enable learners not only to acquire information and skills but also, and far more important, to *learn how to learn*. For learners to adapt to changing situations, to take charge of those changes rather than suffer them as victims, education must be a lifelong process, continually renewed and revitalized.

Table 10 Female Enrollment by Level, as a Percentage of Total Enrollment in Sub-Saharan Africa, 1960–1995

(Percentages)

Year	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
1960	34%	25%	10%
1970	39%	31%	16%
1980	43%	34%	21%
1985	45%	41%	25%
1990	45%	40%	26%
1995	45%	44%	35%

Sources:
1960 World Bank, *Education in Sub-Saharan Africa*, Tables A-1, A-2, and A-4 (weighted average).
1970 World Bank, *Education in Sub-Saharan Africa*, Tables A-1, A-2, and A-4 (weighted average).
1980 UNESCO, *World Education Report, 1993*, Tables 6, 7, 8.
1985 UNESCO, *World Education Report, 1995*, Tables 6, 7, 8.
1990 UNESCO, *World Education Report, 1993*, Tables 6, 7, 8.
1995 UNESCO, *World Education Report, 1998*, Tables 6, 7, 8.

The focus for Africa's farmers lies well beyond their fields and the village market. To improve their standard of living, they must understand and address how frost in Brazil influences coffee farmers everywhere, how collapsing currencies in South Asia affect the market for cloves, how to put to productive use new findings from distant research centers on cotton blight, and how to organize their own society so that they are not exploited by merchants, landlords, or corrupt politicians. What is usually termed *globalization* is not new to Africa. As Wallerstein notes,

> As used by most persons in the last ten years, 'globalization' refers to some assertedly new, chronologically recent, process in which states are said to be *no longer* primary units of decision-making, but are now, only now, finding themselves located in a structure in which something called the 'world market,' a somewhat mystical and surely reified entity, dictates the rules.[10]

Clearly, the international integration of goods, technology, labor, and capital has a long and energetic history. Throughout that period controllers of capital have been powerful decision-makers, not infrequently determining state behavior. And while new technology does permit instantaneous transmission from one end of the world to the other and does enable researchers in Africa to consult the same electronic databases as researchers in, say, Sweden, Japan, or the U.S., the movement of labor remains sharply controlled and restricted by nationally-set rules. Colonial rule was,

among other things, a general strategy for integrating Africa into the global political economy on terms set largely in Europe. Africa's underdevelopment is in large part a function of global rules that facilitate the flow of capital and restrict the movement of labor. Formally managed by the World Bank and the IMF, structural adjustment plays a similar role. What has changed for Africa in the current era is that information technology accelerates those flows. As Rugumamu puts it, "What distinguishes the nature and magnitude of the impact of globalization on respective actors is the unequal access to dominant organizations, institutions, and dominant transactions in the emerging global order."[17] For Africa, then, the challenge of globalization is to employ the new technologies to Africa's advantage. To achieve that, education must assure that Africa is able not only to produce cotton, but also to manufacture textiles and to make the looms, build the factories, and create the economic enterprises required to do so efficiently and effectively. Even more, Africa must innovate as well as operate. The development of Africa requires that education enable Africans to be not only effective consumers and managers of production but imaginative and creative producers of production.

> We live in an age in which the role of science based technologies as a major determinant of the pace of social and economic change, as well as of global power structures, has become even more pronounced. In the past, there were great civilizations in the South that were fertile in scientific ideas, but the bulk of new knowledge now originates in the developed countries of the North. . . . .
>
> Unless the South learns to harness the forces of modern science and technology, it has no chance of fulfilling its developmental aspirations or its yearning for an effective voice in the management of global interdependence. All its societies must therefore mount a determined effort to absorb, adapt, and assimilate new technological advances as part of their development strategies. Simultaneously, their technological, economic, and social structures must acquire a built-in inducement and capacity to generate new technologies in accordance with their development needs.
>
> The foundation for the build-up of scientific and technological capabilities in the South is an educated and skilled labor force, with ample opportunities for continuing education and updating of knowledge and skills throughout the productive career. To achieve this, all countries of the South should give priority to providing a high standard of education to all children between the ages of 6 and 15 years, with basic sciences and mathematics being given the importance that is in keeping with the requirements of the modern technological age. The tree of knowledge can flourish only if it is securely planted in the educational system.[18]

Thus, understandings of education's role in development in Africa diverge sharply, with important educational and political consequences. Efforts to expand access, desegregate the schools and curriculum, and promote equity reflect the premise and promise of decolonization. From that perspective, education has a broad and transformative mission. Parallel to that orientation and often in tension with it has been a narrower view of the relationship between education and development (understood broadly as of improved standard of living and the economic changes required to achieve that). Often mechanically economic, this view assigns primary importance to the instrumental role of education in expanding production and productive capacity and generally considers other education objectives to be societal luxuries that must be deferred as currently unaffordable. However desirable, the humanist aspirations of liberal education, the moral obligation to redress inequalities, the expected social benefits of promoting equity, and the potential power of political mobilization and expanded democratic participation all must wait, or alternatively be achieved as by-products of insisting that schools focus on preparing the next generation for their expected roles in the national and global economies. These are indeed difficult choices, its advocates insist, but unavoidable for poor countries.

That orientation is reinforced by the widespread concern with what is generally termed "educated unemployment." The widespread adoption of this terminology is itself revealing. What in fact is the problem here? What distinguishes the unemployment of the more educated from the joblessness of those with little or no schooling? Surely neither the society at large nor the young people who cannot find jobs would be better off if they were illiterate as well as unemployed. That young people who finish school are frustrated in not finding jobs, or the jobs they think they should have, is primarily a function of job creation (understood broadly) and not of schooling. While those in power may find threatening the rising level of education among the unemployed, that is primarily a problem of politics, not education.

Still, the common assumption is that modifying education's content and practices will either increase employability or alter expectations, or both. Yet, even with better trained and paid teachers, less crowded classrooms, and sufficient instructional materials, the education system cannot on its own overcome the consequences of a stagnant economy. Where there are more seekers than jobs, a modified school curriculum may affect which students find employment but not how many. Life experiences, far more than school lessons, shape expectations. Efforts to reduce unemployment among those who finish school and to reduce their frustration and alienation, must focus on job creation (including providing tools, start-up capital, and the like) rather than on schooling. In the absence of more jobs—that is, economic growth—neither the subject content nor the political education in schools will do much to reduce the frustration or relieve the political elite's concerns.

Combined, the common view of education's role in development and this concern with educated unemployment have generated a series of efforts to link education closely with perceived skills needs. Over time, the strategies for forging that link have evolved. Earlier, the core notion was termed manpower planning, which relied on projected labor needs as the major determinant of current education programmes and allocations. While still widely used, that ap-

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proach has also been widely criticized. It is difficult and perhaps impossible to develop precise projections of needed skills very far into the future, especially in a growing economy in the midst of rapid industrial and technical change. As well, this approach commonly underestimates the extent and rapidity of career changes. Since it understands education primarily in terms of its skills training consequences, this approach tends to disregard intellectual growth, the development of critical and problem-solving abilities, the encouragement of creativity and expression, and many other dimensions of education that have no immediate and direct vocational outcome.

In part a response to humanpower planning, an alternative approach emphasized the broad societal interest in access to education and used social demands to shape education programs. This approach, too, has been both widely practiced and widely criticized. While focusing on demand enables education institutions to be very sensitive to changing perspectives and preferences in the population, it is also subject to misunderstandings, fashions, and special circumstances that make it difficult to develop a coherent and integrated national education agenda. A different response to humanpower planning was to locate principal programmatic decision making within education and training institutions. Clearly, this supply orientation maximizes institutional autonomy. Where institutions are especially sensitive to their economic, political, and social context, that autonomy may be very desirable. At the same time, this approach is not readily compatible with efforts to set national policies and priorities. Nor does it facilitate coordinating the activities of different institutions. And where institutions are primarily responsive to their own internal pressures for new and enlarged programmes, the risk of a mismatch between labour market demand and graduates' specializations is very high. Most recently, attention has heavily turned toward decentralized education decision making, to which I shall return below.

The effort to link curriculum and the education system more generally to the labor market has also led to the regularly reiterated charge that schooling is too academic and too humanist. Education must be, the constant refrain goes, relevant to national needs. In this view, most often national needs, relevance, and the curriculum implications of this claim are construed very narrowly. Beyond a rate and pattern of economic growth that enables people to improve their standard of living and develop their spiritual as well as material lives, what exactly are national needs?[19] Steel mills and a microelectronics industry? More village boreholes and grain mills? What of higher quality and more reliable public services? Or the demand—often termed "need"—for more video recorders and other consumer goods? And what of the need for moral and ethical behavior, or non-violent conflict resolution, or equitable treatment of all citizens? Where to rank cultural, aesthetic, and literary needs? All societies continually redefine their needs and priorities. In all societies, some groups assert that their needs are the national needs. Education surely has a role in both shaping and addressing national needs, but equally surely there are no linear paths to be followed.

Relevance also makes sense only in terms of context and process. Often, for example, the observation that most people in Africa are rural agriculturalists leads to the assertion that education should focus on farmers' tools and skills. From that perspective, schools that teach languages to introduce young people to other cultures or that assign books intended to expose learners to new ideas and different ways of thinking or insist that students use microscopes to understand and master systematic observation and comparison are wasting time in irrelevant programmes. But if so, how will Africa ever escape its dependence on others' ideas and technologies? How will Africa move beyond exploiting non-renewable resources to creating and developing new resources? If no Africans experiment with sub-nuclear particles, or write new computer programs, or devise new approaches to dysentery, malaria, and AIDS, how can Africans assume responsibility for their own direction? How will Africa prepare the next generations to innovate, to invent, to create? If education is to expand horizons rather than limit them, determining what is relevant requires not a simple statement of the obvious but an on-going engagement with values, expectations, and constraints in each society. Relevant programs emerge not from an authoritative decision but from collaboration and negotiation. In practice, however, it has generally been the narrow construction of needs and relevance that has prevailed. Unemployment is attributed to miseducation, this is, to studying history and language rather than chemistry and accounting.

In sum, there have emerged two sharply divergent perspectives on education and development in Africa. In one, education's role is transformative, liberating, and synthetic. Education must enable people to understand their society in order to change it. Education must be as much concerned with human relations as with skills, and equally concerned with eliminating inequality and practicing democracy. Education must focus on learning how to learn and on examining critically accepted knowledge and ways of doing things. Favoring innovation and experimentation, that sort of education is potentially liberating, empowering, and as such, threatening to established structures of power, both within and outside the schools. This orientation has remained the minority view.

Notwithstanding occasional initiatives to redefine the core and practice of education, for example, education for self reliance in Tanzania and production brigades in Botswana, the second—and dominant—perspective understands education primarily as skills development and preparation for the world of work. The emphasis on relevance assigns low priority to educating historians, philosophers, and poets, and thereby to cultivating the historian, philosopher, and poet in all learners. Fearful of unemployed graduates, leaders expect schools to limit learners' aspirations. Shaped by national

examinations, curriculum revolves much more around information to be acquired than around developing strategies and tools for acquiring that information, generating ideas, or crafting critiques.

Experimentation and Innovation

Like much of education, this terrain is contested. As I have noted, Africa has also seen important experiments and innovations in education. In the late 1960s Tanzania rejected manpower planning in favor of education for self reliance. At independence the pressing national need, it was thought, was Tanzanians with higher level skills to fill the posts of departing Europeans and to branch out in new directions. Since available resources did not permit rapid expansion in all fields, allocations were to be directed by projections of specific skills needs. As the 1960s proceeded, Tanzania's leaders became increasingly critical of that approach, primarily because it constrained the expansion of primary education, that most visible of the fruits of independence. The country was focusing major resources on a small part of the population, Tanzania's president Julius Nyerere noted, creating an arrogant elite detached from their social roots. Scarce resources ought to be redirected toward those who had little or no education rather than concentrated on those who had the most, and the most alienating, education. Reversing the earlier orientation, Nyerere's widely read and cited paper, *Education for Self-Reliance*, shifted the emphasis to primary and adult education.[20] Schools were to become community institutions, intimately connected with the patterns and rhythms of the local setting. Schools were also to have farms and workshops, both to value directly productive activities and to generate supplementary income. Production brigades in Botswana also sought to integrate learning and the local setting by creating community schools in which learners and teachers were also to be producers.[21] In the effort to expand access rapidly, several African countries experimented with different models of pre-service and in-service teacher education. Others—Zimbabwe's efforts stand out—explored how to draw effectively on the local setting to develop lessons and materials for teaching science where laboratories did not exist or were poorly equipped. More recently, dispersed and locally managed teachers resource centers have proved to be an effective strategy for providing continuing support to instructional staff. Imaginative and energetic literacy campaigns brought rapid progress in several countries. Innovative community-based non-school education programs have emerged across Africa, often with the support of a local or international non-governmental organization.

Though materially poor, several of Africa's higher education institutions have been intellectually very rich, exploring ideas and constructs with contacts and influences around the world. Ghana, for example, nurtured the rejuvenation of studies and debates about pan-Africanism. In seminars, in their research, and in major student holiday research projects scholars at the University of Dar es Salaam explored the claims and problems and refined the methods of oral history, thereby joining and advancing an international debated among professional historians.

Recognizing the importance of interchanges across Africa, especially since it has often been easier for African scholars to communicate with colleagues in Europe than with colleagues in a neighboring country, researchers have established several continent-wide organizations. Among them, the African Association of Political Science, founded in Dar es Salaam in 1973, has regularly brought scholars together, published a journal, provided modest funding to assist participation in international meetings, and generally challenged Africa's political scientists to be critical and to cooperate. Two parallel networks link education researchers in West and Central Africa and in Eastern and Southern Africa, concerned especially with the role of research in making public policy. Several research institutes and centers have sought to provide a venue for critical research and debate and to support both established and younger scholars, among them the Council for the Development of Economic and Social Research in Africa (Dakar) and SAPES Trust (Harare).

The general point here is that across a parched and bleak landscape, education innovation and experimentation have periodically flourished in Africa. Some initiatives have had very wide recognition and influence. Most, however, have found it difficult to survive after the founders' departure or after the exhaustion of the initial funding. Although foreign funds have periodically supported reforms and experiments, rarely has that support been directed toward initiatives with strong local roots and effective organic local participation. Indeed, overall, aid dependence has generally discouraged experimentation, especially where proposed activities have been oriented toward broad national political and social goals rather than more narrowly defined instructional tasks.

Setting Education Policy

Education policy and agenda setting in Africa have taken many forms, from broadly inclusive to narrowly authoritarian.[22] The inherited model was distinctly bureaucratic, oriented more toward control and management than toward innovation and development, a pattern that has been widely retained and reinforced. In some countries key individuals, often the education minister but occasionally the head of state, has played the central role in defining problems and charting directions. In other countries, select commissions, sometimes composed primarily of educators and other times of senior politicians, gathered evidence, commissioned studies, and recommended new policies. In still other settings, a

major national conference (in Francophone Africa, états-généraux) provided opportunities for the diverse interests of the education community to present their views and construct coalitions to support particular policies. Some countries have employed several different strategies.

Policy is also made through practice. Indeed, as we consider education policy making, it is essential not to equate policy with official statements that may have little or no influence on what actually occurs. Most of the writing on public policy focuses on formal pronouncements by authoritative institutions. Since making policy is assumed to be the prerogative of those in power, that literature studies elites and formal documents. Most often, this perspective understands policy making as a sequence of activities and feedback loops, moving from vision to formulation to negotiation to policy specification and announcement to implementation to evaluation. This understanding of policy is widely shared and regularly asserted in Africa.

Yet, policy is made as much—or often a good deal more—in practice as by pronouncement. Consider, for example, policy on language of instruction. The education ministry may have formal rules, publicly announced and officially recorded, specifying that instructors are to use a particular language to teach certain subjects. Suppose, however, that an on-site study shows that 90% of the instructors use other languages to teach those subjects. When asked, a school principal might say that "our policy in this school is to use the language that our students understand. To do otherwise will make their examination marks even worse." What, then, is the *policy*? From one perspective, the policy is what the ministry has promulgated, and what the teachers do is a deviation from official policy. From the other perspective, the actual policy—that is, the working rules that guide behavior—is what the teachers are doing. In this view, the ministry documents are just that: official statements that may or may not be implemented and certainly not guides to what people actually do. *Stated policy* may thus be very different from *policy in practice*.

Recognizing that policy results from practice as well as from official pronouncements helps us identify other major influences on education policy in Africa. Increased reliance on foreign funding has expanded the direct role of both the finance ministry, which generally manages all external aid, and the funding and technical assistance agencies, whose own agendas have come to guide and constrain education initiatives and reforms in Africa. Explicit conditions attached to foreign aid may require particular policies or priorities, for example attention to educating females. Even where there are no explicit conditions of that sort and where foreign aid is a very small portion of total national spending on education, external influence can still be decisive. Consciously or unconsciously, African policy and decision makers shape their programs and projects, and thus policies and priorities, to fit what seems most likely to secure foreign funding. As the Director of Planning in Tanzania's education ministry explained, planning had in fact become marketing.[23] His task was less a process of exploring needs and developing strategies to address them than an effort to study the market of prospective funders, identifying its priorities and value points, and then to use that market knowledge to craft, advertise, and sell projects and programs. That was perhaps an effective coping strategy in difficult circumstances. Still, it entrenched the funding agencies' role in setting national education policies and priorities. As well, it reinforced the status and influence of a particular set of actors within the country, not those with the clearest or most dynamic education vision or those with the most solid national political base but rather those who proved to be most effective in securing foreign funding. In these ways aid dependence becomes a vehicle for internalizing within African education establishments externally set policies, priorities, and understandings. While human capital theory and treating education as an investment in the development of human capital have clearly external origins, among their most energetic advocates have become Africa's educators.

Education and the State

The state in Africa has come to play a major role in the processes of accumulation and legitimacy.[24] Sometimes on behalf of an emerging indigenous bourgeoisie and often in the absence of local capitalists capable of controlling the national political economy and in the context of a continuing dominant role of foreign capital, the state in Africa assumes responsibility for fostering and managing the accumulation and reinvestment of capital that are essential both for economic growth and development and for the security of the tenure of the national leadership. In practice, that often requires the African state to manage conditions for accumulation that are largely specified externally (structural adjustment programs are the most recent example). As it does so, the African state must at the same time maintain its own legitimacy. As students of industrialized capitalist states have stressed, there is a necessary tension between legitimacy and accumulation.

Within a peripheral capitalist economy with fragile political authority, accumulation requires a relatively weak, poorly integrated, and politically disorganized labor force. A liberal democratic capitalist system requires even more: a state that can successfully present itself as universal, representative of the popular will rather than an agent of the dominant class(es). The policies the state pursues to maintain its universalist image, however, threaten its ability to manage, or even assist, accumulation. Each arena in which citizen participation is encouraged, and in which some degree of democratic choice is permitted, becomes a point of potential vulnerability for the state itself, and for the

capitalist order. Promoting legitimacy through controlled democratic practice—which surely has been occurring in Africa—risks threatening the accumulation process. Empowered peasants may organize and demand greater control over both the organization of production and the distribution of wealth. At the same time, facilitating accumulation by constraining participation—which has also occurred in Africa—undermines legitimacy.

Accumulation is particularly problematic for the leadership of peripheral conditioned capitalist states.[25] As Fanon foresaw, the structural interests of Africa's post-colonial leadership maintained and reinforced their dependence.[26] Notwithstanding the rhetoric that accompanied decolonization, the agenda of most of those who assumed office at the departure of the European rulers was neither radical transformation of the peripheral economy nor the risk-taking required for capitalist innovation. Fragile states with insecure elites were disinclined or unable to take a long term view of what national development would require and reluctant to make a continuing investment in a skilled, disciplined, and accountable public service.[27] One consequence has been a constellation of interests and power that found it difficult to create conditions conducive to accumulation and sustained investment in the development of new production and productive capacity. Another consequence has been a generally inefficient and not infrequently corrupt administration. For education, this situation has been manifested in ineffective use of the limited resources available. Facilitates are poorly maintained. Even when prepared and printed, instructional materials often do not reach students. Funds are poorly managed, both nationally and locally, with little accountability and reliable oversight. Inefficiency becomes normal, both expected and tolerated.

This tension between accumulation and legitimacy is regularly reflected in education policy, perhaps the most contested of public policies. Establishing and managing the conditions for accumulation favor regarding education instrumentally, primarily as a set of institutional arrangements concerned with preparing the future labor force, which includes developing both skills and work discipline. That orientation reinforces the inclination to link schooling with projected labor needs, to emphasize acquiring information, to regard teachers as transmitters and students as receivers of knowledge, and to rely heavily on examinations and other selection and exclusion mechanisms. The commonly asserted view that young Africans must be prepared for their roles in the global economy, that is that their jobs and the skills those jobs require are likely to be defined not within the country but at distant centers of economic and political power, bolsters the external orientation of this instrumental view of education. Schools, it is argued, need to prepare the workers who will, say, assemble automobiles as well and more efficiently than automobile workers elsewhere.

Legitimacy, however, is rooted in popular participation and consent. Maintaining the legitimacy not only of particular office holders but of governing arrangements more generally requires the active involvement of an informed public aware that it wields power and willing to use it. From this perspective, education must be concerned with, and must be seen to be concerned with, encouraging participation, redressing inequality, promoting social mobility, and fostering cooperation and non-violent conflict resolution. This orientation reinforces the inclination to regard learners as active initiators, not passive recipients. As well, opening new schools throughout the country has been one of the clearest and most tangible manifestations of the provision of services to the populace.[28]

In short, as it struggles with its own fragility, the state adopts two different, at times incompatible, postures toward the education system. Most often its orientation is functional and technical. Periodically, however, its expectations for schools are more liberal and humanist. The appropriate institutional configurations, even spatial arrangements, for these two orientations also differ. The school-as-factory architecture so common throughout the world, classrooms with the teacher-authority at the front, separated by buffering space from students in orderly rows, and hierarchical administrations within schools and school systems all reflect the instrumental role of schooling. Open classrooms, activity group seating patterns, and shared leadership responsibilities generally reflect a preference for the liberal and humanist perspective.

Note that I have pointed here to two related but distinct tensions. One is confronted in the political system as the state works to promote both accumulation and economic growth and at the same time to establish and reinforce its legitimacy. The second is confronted in the education system, which is charged both with preparing students for the world of work and at the same time with nurturing the development of individual potential, intellectual critique, and societal well-being. Each with its own characteristics, participants, institutional configurations, and consequences, these two tensions are interdependent but not identical. While they intersect frequently and are often mutually reinforcing, neither fully determines the other.

Understood somewhat more broadly, education in Africa has a dual charter. Its major task is the reproduction of the economic, political, and social order.[29] For that, schools assume responsibility for developing requisite skills (training). That in turn is generally assumed to require that students be assigned to ability groups (tracking). Schools then become the mechanism by which society selects which young people will proceed far in their education and which will not and certifying the accomplishments of those who succeed. Especially important at this juncture is the internalization of the reasonableness of that certification. For schools to serve their reproductive role, students who fail must attribute their problems to their own lack of skill or application, or to circumstances beyond their control, or perhaps to

bad luck. What the schools must avoid is the understanding that tracking, achievement, and certification, and their consequences for subsequent life chances, are planned and controllable outcomes of schools and schooling. (Consider for a moment teachers whose students all receive high marks. The immediate assumption is that the teacher must be doing something wrong, since the classes of teachers who behave appropriately have both successes and failures.) Schools must legitimize as well as track, select, and certify. Their assessments must be accepted as just and appropriate and internalized. Where there is significant unemployment and underemployment, lengthening the course of study, ostensibly to enable graduates to be better prepared and thus more employable, delays their entry into the work force. When they do not secure the jobs they seek, that emphasis on schooling as job preparation also functions to direct their frustrations away from the economic and political system that has not created sufficient jobs and toward the education system that has apparently failed to prepare them adequately.

Reproducing the social order in a capitalist world system, however, also requires critique and innovation. To survive in a fiercely competitive environment, national economies must have some people who reject the old ways of doing things, who insist on looking for better alternatives, who are willing to take the risks to criticize and innovate. Hence, schools have a radical as well as a conservative role. They must enable and encourage at least some students to ask difficult questions, to be impatient with the answers they receive, to trust their own judgment at least as much as their teachers' opinions.

The education system is thus charged with contradictory tasks in reproducing society: preserving and protecting the major features of the social order and at the same time challenging and changing them.[30] Commonly, education systems try to manage that combination by separation—emphasizing the conservative role in most schools for most students and encouraging critique in a few schools, generally for elite students. In practice, that separation is difficult to establish and maintain. Each orientation is corrosive of the other. Critique and innovation have a momentum of their own. Schools become sites for rebellion, indirect (withdrawal, rejection) and direct (militant organization).

During the more recent nationalist and liberation struggles, militants emphasized education's critical role. As minority rule was dismantled and the new order emerged, nearly everywhere in Africa education has turned back to its conservative charter, more concerned with preserving order than with challenging common understandings and forging new paths. In the circumstances of the peripheral conditioned state and dependent legitimation, accumulation is deemed more important than redistribution.

Privatization

What, then, of the strong push for privatization? Historically, education in Africa has been understood primarily as a public responsibility. In recent years, private education institutions have proliferated at all levels, both with and without government encouragement. The arguments for this transition toward an expanded role for private education are several. The most compelling is that they can expand access, since even with the most optimistic assumptions, government education systems cannot meet the demand for education in most African countries. Since they are likely to be better funded, private schools can also improve the quality of education, it is argued, and in doing so challenge public schools to improve their quality. Explicitly or implicitly, it is often assumed that private schools will be more efficiently managed than their public counterparts and that they will achieve comparable or better results at lower unit costs.

Historically, private schools have functioned to reinforce and protect inequality within Africa, usually in racial terms but more recently in terms of socioeconomic status. More affluent families can send their children to schools with higher fees and thereby increase the likelihood that their children will succeed them in higher level and better paid posts. Not surprisingly, reactions to the pressure for privatization are mixed.

On this, the data are muddy. One confusion is that the category "private school" is often applied both to entrepreneurial, for-profit schools and to schools established and managed by churches, other community or non-governmental organizations, or even district or local government. A second is that countries and organizations use different definitions of "private." As well, while in some African countries private schools do seem to provide stronger academic programs, in other countries it is the government schools that are the most highly regarded. Since the categories obscure important differences in schools and in their impacts on their societies, the aggregate data on this issue are problematic. The percentage of learners in private schools seems to have declined in precisely the era of very strong pressure to privatize. In 1970, private schools enrolled 21.9% of Africa's primary school students, but by 1990 only 7.3%. At the secondary level, the percentage of all students enrolled in private schools declined from 25.3% in 1970 to 12.2% in 1990.[31] At the same time, scattered case study evidence suggests that significant additional private instruction, often in the form of special fee-based lessons offered by school teachers, is widespread in many countries.

Combined, those observations suggest that privatization may have had a particularly perverse effect in Africa. On the one hand, perhaps with a few exceptions it may not have generated the additional education revenue and expanded

access widely expected to result from encouraging the proliferation of non-governmental schools. On the other, privatization may have reinforced the disparities within education and inequality in society more generally.

Decentralization

The widespread sense of crisis in education in Africa combined with the perceived failure of central institutions has fueled a fascination with decentralization.[32] A late 1980s World Bank report on education exemplifies the widespread optimism by declaring "decentralization . . . the key that unlocks the potential of schools to improve the quality of education."[33] The rationales for decentralization are multiple. Greater local autonomy is deemed inherently desirable on human, societal, and intellectual grounds, emphasizing the development of human potential and the intrinsic—as contrasted with instrumental—value of democracy and thus citizen participation in governance The devolution of authority is deemed essential to maintaining and expanding political power or control, or, from the opposite perspective, for challenging and reforming the political system. Decentralization can permit expanded access to decision making arenas. Decentralization is also expected to lead to improved decision making, reduced bureaucracy, and better administration.

Experiences with decentralization in education have been mixed, often disappointing.[34] Expected benefits, have proved illusory. In part, the rhetoric of decentralization has not in practice been accompanied by real transfer of authority. In part, regarding decentralization primarily as a strategy for improving administration and implementation has itself been self-limiting. Decentralization is inherently a political process concerned with specifying who rules in broader or narrower settings. Indeed, there is no absolute value in either central direction or local autonomy. Both are more or less important at different moments. Both must coexist. Notwithstanding the common assertion that decentralization empowers citizens, especially disadvantaged groups, in their relationship to large, bureaucratic, and distant government, neither centralization nor decentralization necessarily benefits the disadvantaged. Where privilege is maintained by strong central authority, increased local autonomy may create room for some groups to transform their circumstances. Where inequality is maintained by local authorities, however, disadvantaged groups may seek intervention by the national government to constrain the action of local institutions. Hence, it is not surprising that ostensibly similar institutional arrangements can serve very different goals and move in very different directions.

Indeed, decentralization can have very perverse consequences. To the extent that decentralization strengthens local interests and their institutions, it obstructs redistribution. Parents may be willing to pay more for their children's education. But except in unusual circumstances they are generally reluctant to see their increased school fees used to improve the schooling of others' children elsewhere. As recent experiences in South Africa have shown, local control thus permits advantaged communities to entrench their privilege and resist change.

South Africa

Until recently, South Africa's experiences were generally excluded from discussions of education in Africa. The extremism of apartheid and South African politics more generally were reflected in the extremism of its education. Though extreme, South Africa was perhaps never as unique as was commonly thought. The use of education to structure economic, political, and social roles—in South Africa, to segregate and subordinate—is common throughout the world. Central to the maintenance of minority rule and organizing and managing a sharply differentiated society, education was at the same time also an escape valve for a selected elite. Education has as well been a sharply contested terrain, manifested repeatedly in South Africa, including students' uprising in Soweto in 1976. Indeed, several of the themes addressed here are as relevant to South Africa as they are to other settings. The delayed and very dramatic transition to majority rule in South Africa combines with its more developed productive capacity and infrastructure, and therefore available national and individual wealth, to extend and entrench South Africa's influence across the continent. Let us note briefly several of the major currents in South African education.[35]

Like colonial education elsewhere in Africa, education in apartheid South Africa sought explicitly to structure roles and relationships in society. Especially as the education philosophy was elaborated and articulated by the National Party government that came to power in 1948, most Africans were to receive little education, if any at all, focused on the basic literacy, numeracy, and other skills deemed necessary for the labor force in the country's industrializing economy. Educators were cautioned to avoid raising students' expectations that education would lead to "greener pastures." At the same time, a small segment of each subordinate group was to have access to more advanced education, to provide the administrative staff, the teachers, the nurses, even a few doctors and lawyers, that the system required. Hence, a few Africans were admitted to elite schools, generally church or other private institutions. As elsewhere in Africa, then, from that elite came both the lower level officials and administrators of minority rule and the activist leaders who militantly opposed it.

Where education is primarily concerned with structuring roles, it is the experience of schooling that matters, not learning. As the critics of apartheid education highlighted its shortcomings, they sought also to shift its emphasis from

schooling to learning. That distinction was posed especially sharply in the debates on strategies for addressing the education of older and younger adults who had never been to school or whose schooling had been truncated by apartheid and the anti-apartheid struggle. In the midst of repression and challenge, a wide range of community groups developed programs intended to enable adults to continue their education in diverse non-school settings. As the anti-apartheid struggle intensified, education also became a mobilization strategy, concerned with raising political consciousness and enabling disadvantaged groups to seize the initiative and reclaim their rights as citizens. In this domain, too, South African experiences paralleled those in other countries. During their struggles, for example, Zimbabwe's, Mozambique's, and Namibia's liberation movements recognized the importance of education as mobilization and politicization. Schools in war zones were mobile community centers concerned with confronting not only the military power of their opponents but also the internalization of subordination within the African population. In the initial years of majority rule, however, the emphasis has perceptibly shifted from learning and mobilization to schooling. Schools are the markers of modernity. Formerly shut, schools are the entry gates to desired futures, the fruits of the defeat of the old order. With a long history of attention to examinations and certification, the education system and its officials are more comfortable dealing with schooling than with learning. The widely heralded efforts to restore the culture of learning have in practice had more to do with reestablishing the discipline of schooling than with nurturing and harnessing curiosity and the intrinsic rewards of the learning process. Like other African countries in an earlier era, South Africa has apparently moved from education as politics to education as administration.

In part, the marginalization of political initiatives for education reflects a shifting center of gravity in political leadership specific to South Africa's setting. Primarily concerned with the education of exiles, earlier the African National Congress education department did not play a strong role in the formulation of post-apartheid education policy. Student uprisings in the mid 1970s and protests and boycotts continuing into the 1980s seized the initiative in education away from the apartheid state. But critical as these were, they were unable to set and lead a new agenda for transforming education. With the formation of the National Education Co-ordinating (formerly Crisis) Committee (NECC) in 1985, a student-teacher-parent anti-apartheid education alliance with strong community roots, this protest became focused, coordinated and directed at the establishment of an alternative, democratic, critical, empowering, non-racist, and non-sexist education. Unbanned early in 1990s, the ANC eventually eclipsed and marginalized the NECC. As it did so, the ANC both reflected and led the transition from the focus on opposition and then policy to an overarching concern with planning. Relatively rapidly, the ANC education department itself ceased to play the active leadership role, deferring to decision makers and planners, primarily those within the reorganized Department of Education.

Following the majority rule election, the new education leadership did not assume the mantle of radical and militant educators. Whereas the period before the majority rule election was marked by the energy, dynamism, populism, and urgency of the education democratic movement, the immediate post-election period was remarkable for its uncertainty and the absence of a visible, energetic, and purposive leadership. That became even more consequential as South Africa struggled to decentralize responsibility for education, a constitutional compromise forged to secure broad participation in the majority rule election. That is, notwithstanding the earlier expectation that the multiple, racially differentiated education authorities would be integrated into a strong national ministry, all but higher education became the responsibility of the nine new provinces. Since only a few of those provinces had the infrastructure, staff, and experience to manage an education system and since no one had experience with decentralized education authority, the initial consequence of this extensive decentralization was to blunt still further the radical education initiative. As people scrambled to implement the new pattern, it became clear that decentralization has provided an extended lease on life for the old education authorities and offered to advantaged communities a new framework for preserving privilege.

At the same time, the inherited inequalities combined with the commitment to national reconciliation, in part manifested in a post-apartheid government of national unity, to generate a financial crisis for education in a relatively affluent country. The general agreement was to expand access without reducing quality, understood to mean maintaining spending in elite schools and affluent communities. The recognition that there were limited available resources for a reform agenda fueled an inclination—as in the rest of Africa—to seek external funds. With those funds came ideas about what is desirable and appropriate for the country's post-apartheid education agenda and how to achieve it.

Education had been at the center of the anti-apartheid struggle. Its task, everyone agreed, was social transformation. As the new government assumed power, responding to both general and specific pressures, it moved from mobilization to planning to implementation. As elsewhere in Africa, its principal concerns were expanded access, desegregation, and the redress of inequality. In the context of a constitutionally required fundamental decentralization, education debates were less focused on learning and liberation increasingly concerned with schooling and examinations and more generally with education as preparation for the world of work. Surprisingly quickly, education's conservative charter was once again becoming paramount.

From Education as Social Transformation to Education as (and for) Production

Let us take stock. African countries came to their independence with high aspirations and expectations. For capitalists and socialists alike, education held the promise of national development, community improvement, and individual social mobility. Nearly everywhere schools mushroomed and enrollments increased. Community centers, radio, television, and village newspapers were employed in efforts to enable older learners to participate in the march toward education for all.

In much of Africa, the rate of education expansion could not be sustained. Facilitates deteriorated, worn out textbooks were not replaced, libraries had few books, laboratories had little equipment, and gross enrollment ratios stagnated or declined. Measures of education quality, of school efficiency, and of teacher and learner satisfaction showed similar distress. By the end of the Twentieth Century, spending per pupil in affluent countries was 40–60 times higher than comparable spending in most of Africa. There continued to be imaginative experiments, but in general promising innovations were localized and often did not survive the departure of their founders.

As they confronted this education crisis whose roots lay in poverty, the international division of labor, fragile dependent states and deteriorating public service, African countries turned increasingly to foreign funding. Innovation and reform, and in some countries even textbooks and desks were assumed to require external support. With the foreign funding came ideas and values, advice and directives on how education systems ought to be managed and targeted. While the external resources amounted to a very small portion of total spending on education, their direct and indirect influence on policy and programs was often substantial. Notwithstanding a wide range of approaches to setting education policy, their imprint on education agendas and priorities is clearly visible across the continent. As external agencies undertook research as well as providing funding and development advice, their perspectives on scholarship and science shaped approaches, methodologies, and the definition of universities' missions and more generally the scientific enterprise. Throughout Africa, unable to find local support, education researchers became contracted consultants. As they did so, those understandings of research, from framing questions to gathering data to interpretive strategies, were internalized and institutionalized, no longer foreign imports but now the apparently unexceptional everyday routines of universities, research institutes, and indeed informed discourse.

We see here international convergence at several levels. Increasingly, the specification of education quality is presumed to be universal rather than nationally or culturally or situationally specific. As such, it is amenable to measurement through the sorts of standardized assessments that seek to compare, say, reading ability among fourth grade students in England, Korea, and Zimbabwe. Similarly, notions of effective schools, of good school management, of community participation are also treated as universals.

It is in a context of persisting poverty, aid dependence, increasing debt, and powerful pressures from within and without to adopt a particular understanding of development, that African governments have been inclined to emphasize accumulation over legitimation. Similarly, though pockets of innovation and radical reform persist, the trajectory of education policy and practice in Africa has generally been to discard or devalue education's role in economic and social transformation in favor of education's role in maintaining particular patterns of economic, social, and political organization. In practice, the productivist and conservative charter for education contributes to entrenching still further the conditioned state and Africa's dependence, and within Africa to acquiescing in, even seeing as necessary fundamental societal inequalities and the politics they breed.

Consistent with that conservative role for education, attention has increasingly focused on efficiency, quality, and school improvement, often modeled on approaches and experiences elsewhere. Notwithstanding the rhetoric of liberation and empowerment, the commonly held view is that education must enable Africa to run faster as it tries to catch up with those who are ahead rather than to forge new paths or to transform the international economy and Africa's role in it. Scrambling to catch up always leaves those presumed to be in front to determine where they, and thus everyone else, are going.

Notes

1. An earlier version of this paper appeared in Robert F. Arnove and Carlos Alberto Torres, editors, *Comparative Education: The Dialectic of the Global and the Local* (Boulder: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999), pp. 393-431.

2. J. F. Ade Ajayi, Lameck K. H. Goma, and G. Ampah Johnson, *The African Experience with Higher Education*. Accra, London, and Athens, OH: Association of African Universities, James Currey, and Ohio University Press, 1996), p. 145.

3. As we shall see, beyond the mystification and exoticism associated with the "dark continent," the terminology commonly employed regularly structures the discussion in ways that are not immediately apparent even to careful readers and active participants in policy debates. The specification of what is "Africa" is an instructive case in point. Nearly all World Bank and many other documents on Africa include a note that indicates "Most of the discussion and all of the statistics about Africa in this study refer to just thirty-nine countries south of the Sahara, *for which the terms Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa are used interchangeably*" (this example is from World Bank, *Education in Sub-Saharan Africa*, viii; emphasis added). That is, "Africa" is not the Africa specified either by geography—countries on the African continent and its adjacent islands—or by African states themselves—membership in the Organization of African Unity—but rather a subset of those states grouped to reflect the foreign policy interests and categories of the World Bank, the United States, and other countries of the North Atlantic. Unfortunately, there is currently no straightforward resolution to this dilemma. Much of the most readily available data on education in Africa come from publications of those organizations, and to date apparently no one has systematically revised those data to include North Africa or reorganized other data that do include North Africa to make them directly comparable. In this discussion, other than explicitly noted exceptions, my comments generally refer to the entire continent.

4. World Bank. *Priorities and Strategies for Education* (Washington: World Bank, 1995), 14.

5. For a fuller discussion of these understandings of education, see Joel Samoff, "Institutionalizing International Influence," in Robert F. Arnove and Carlos Alberto Torres, editors, *Comparative Education: The Dialectic of the Global and the Local* (Boulder: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999), pp. 51-89.

6. I have addressed this problem in more detail in "The Facade of Precision in Education Data and Statistics: A Troubling Example from Tanzania," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 29,4(December 1991):669-689.

7. The country is Tanzania. UNESCO, *United Republic of Tanzania: Education in Tanzania. Volume I, Overview* (Paris: March, 1989), p. 15.

8. UNESCO, *World Education Report 1998*, Regional tables 3, 5, 6, 7, 8 (the categories are those defined by UNESCO).

9. Inter-Agency Commission, World Conference on Education for All (UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank). *Final Report. World Conference on Education for All. Meeting Basic Learning Needs*. New York: UNICEF, 1990.

10. Unfortunately, there have been few systematic studies of aid to African education and especially of its volume and its impact on the direction of capital flows. For South Africa in 1993, foreign aid was estimated to account for less than 1.5% of total spending on education. See Baudouin Duvieusart and Joel Samoff, *Donor Cooperation and Coordination in Education in South Africa* (Paris: UNESCO, Division for Policy and Sector Analysis, 1994).

11. World Bank, *Priorities and Strategies for Education*, 113.

12. UNESCO, *World Education Report 1998*, Table 4. The broad age range of enrolled students permits figures greater than 100%.

13. UNESCO, *World Education Report 1998*, Tables 6 and 8.

14. Adhiambo Odaga and Ward Heneveld, *Girls and Schools in Sub-Saharan Africa: From Analysis to Action* (Washington: World Bank, 1995), 14.

15. See Joel Samoff, with N'Dri Thérèse Assié-Lumumba, *Analyses, Agendas, and Priorities in African Education: A Review of Externally Initiated, Commissioned, and Supported Studies of Education in Africa, 1990-1994* (Paris: UNESCO, 1996).

16. Immanuel Wallerstein, "The Rise and Future Demise of World-Systems Analysis," *Review* XXI,1(1998):107.

17. Severine M. Rugumamu, *Globalization, Liberalization and Africa's Marginalization*. Harare: African Association of Political Science, Occasional Paper Series v3, n1, 1999, p. 5.

18. *The Challenge to the South: The Report of the South Commission* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 277-278, quoted in UNESCO, *World Education Report 1993*, p. 17.

19. I draw here on discussions of education and relevance in two major Namibian policy statements, *Toward Education for All* (Windhoek: Ministry of Education and Culture, 1993), and *Investing in People, Developing a Country: Higher Education for Development in Namibia* (Windhoek: Ministry of Higher Education, Vocational Training, Science and Technology, 1998).

20. Julius K. Nyerere, *Education for Self-Reliance* (Dar es Salaam: TANU, 1967); reprinted in Julius K. Nyerere, *Freedom and Socialism / Uhuru na Ujamaa* (Dar es Salaam: Oxford University Press, 1968), 267-290.

21. Ingemar Gustafsson, *Integration Between Education and Work at Primary and Post-Primary Level—the Case of Botswana* (Stockholm: University of Stockholm, Institute of International Education, Working Paper Series No. 95, 1985). For a parallel effort in Zimbabwe, see Ingemar Gustafsson, *Zimbabwe Foundation for Education with Production. ZIMFEP. A Follow-Up Study* (Stockholm: Swedish International Development Authority, SIDA Education Division Documents, No. 29, 1985).

22. Two recent collections of case studies address education policy making in Africa: David R. Evans, editor, *Education Policy Formation in Africa: A Comparative Study of Five Countries* (Washington: USAID, Bureau for Africa, Office of Analysis, Research, and Technical Support, Technical Paper No. 12, 1994), and Association for the Development of African Education, *Formulating Education Policy: Lessons and Experiences from sub-Saharan Africa* (Paris: Association for the Development of African Education, 1996). I draw here as well on Joel Samoff, "Education Policy Formation in Tanzania: Self-Reliance and Dependence," in David R. Evans, editor, *Education Policy Formation in Africa: A Comparative Study of Five Countries* (Washington: U.S. Agency for Interna-

tional Development, 1994), 85-126

23. Joel Samoff, with Suleman Sumra, "From Planning to Marketing: Making Education and Training Policy in Tanzania," in Joel Samoff, editor, *Coping With Crisis: Austerity, Adjustment, and Human Resources* (London: Cassell, 1994), 134-172.

24. Since an extended discussion of the state in Africa is far beyond the scope of this paper, I limit my attention here to the tension between accumulation and legitimation and its implications for education. For a more extended development of these and related themes, see Martin Carnoy and Joel Samoff, *Education and Social Transition in the Third World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), especially Part I, and Martin Carnoy, "Education and the State: From Adam Smith to Perestroika," in *Emergent Issues in Education: Comparative Perspectives*. Robert F. Arnove, Philip G. Altbach, and Gail P. Kelly, eds. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992, 143-159.

25. Martin Carnoy, "Education and the Transition State," in Martin Carnoy and Joel Samoff, *Education and Social Transition in the Third World*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990, 63-96.

26. Frantz Fanon, "The Pitfalls of National Consciousness," *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove, 1963).

27. The World Bank and other external agencies have recently focused major attention on problems of governance and administration, though generally without addressing the structural roots of managerial inefficiency and the lack of transparency and accountability. For example, see Mamadou Dia, *A Governance Approach to Civil Service Reform in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Washington: World Bank Technical Paper Number 225, Africa Technical Department Series, 1993), and World Bank, *Sub-Saharan Africa: From Crisis to Sustainable Growth* (Washington: World Bank, 1989).

28. Hans Weiler explores what he terms "compensatory legitimation" in "Education and Power: The Politics of Educational Decentralization in Comparative Perspective," *Educational Policy* 3, 1 (1989): 31-43.

29. Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis have developed and refined the notion of the correspondence between school and society. See "Education as a Site of Contradictions in the Reproduction of the Capital-Labor Relationship: Second Thoughts on the 'Correspondence Principle,'" *Economic and Industrial Democracy* 2 (1981): 223-242.

30. Carnoy and Levin characterize this tension as between education as a democratizing force (social mobility, public education as an equalizing experience, instruction on the democratic ideal) and education as a mechanism for reproducing capitalist inequalities (class, race, or gender division of labor, unequal access to knowledge): Martin Carnoy and Henry M. Levin, *Schooling and Work in the Democratic State* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985).

31. The 1970–1983 data are from the World Bank, *Education in Sub-Saharan Africa*, Table A-13 (weighted means); the 1985–1990 data are from the World Bank, *African Development Indicators 1994–1995*, Table 13-16.

32. The literature has mushroomed. For an overview of major issues, see Joel Samoff, "Centralization: The Politics of Interventionism," *Development and Change* 21,3(July 1990):513-530.

33. Marlaine Lockheed, et al., *The Quality of Primary Education in Developing Countries* (Washington: World Bank, 1989), 1.

34. For an overview or problems drawn from Latin America, see Juan Prawda, *Educational Decentralization in Latin America: Lessons Learned* (Washington: World Bank, Human Resources Division, Technical Department Latin America and the Caribbean Region, 1992).

35. Among recent sources on education in South Africa, see M Cross, and Z. Mkwanazi Twala, editors, *Unity, Diversity and Reconciliation: A Debate On the Politics of Curriculum in South Africa.* (Cape Town: Juta, 1998); G. Gisher, "Policy, Governance and the Reconstruction of Higher Education in South Africa," *Higher Education Policy* 22, 2-3 (July 1998): 121-140; Clive Harber, "Markets, Equity and Democracy—Structural Adjustment and the Tensions of Educational Change in South Africa," *International Journal of Educational Development* 18, 3 (May 1998): 247-254; Jonathan Jansen, "'Essential Alterations'? A Critical Analysis of the State's Syllabus," *Perspectives in Education* 17, 2 (July 1998): 1-11; Peter Kallaway, Glenda Kruss, Aslam Fataar, and Gari Donn, editors, *Education After Apartheid: South African Education in Transition* (Cape Town: UCT Press, 1997); John Pape, "Changing Education for Majority Rule in Zimbabwe and South Africa," *Comparative Education Review* 42, 3 (August 1998): 253-26.

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